

**GEORGE WASHINGTON**  
**(Edited excerpts from Hidden America)**

George Washington complemented Franklin's cultural revolution. If the second was its brilliant mind and inspiration, the first was its engine and staying power. Washington's tremendous willpower enabled him to chart a steady course. Let us look at little known or appreciated parts of his personality and contribution to national history.

Washington was a steadfast Mason from early years. In Masonry he found that code of conduct that allowed him to strive towards the ideal of brotherhood in daily life. It is also in concrete work that he excelled. In the conduct of his Mount Vernon lands Washington carved a path that holds great significance for the future, even as we speak. Unique among the founding fathers Washington fully understood that British Imperialism held sway over the American colonies not through the political but primarily through economic and financial institutions. This was reflected in the South's tobacco and cotton mono-cultures and its perpetual state of indebtedness.

British imperialism was enforced by the Board of Trade. Just one example will show its modus operandi. Before the Navigation Acts the Southern colonies could sell their tobacco to the Dutch for three pence per pound. After the Acts tobacco prices had fallen to half a penny per pound. The same legislation restricted imports to British sources, which were obviously more expensive. This is how the southern economy had become a captive market of the crown. Slavery followed quite logically on economic grounds.

Washington started out as an indebted planter. Later on he embraced the non-importation agreements in response to the Stamp Act. He went further by turning away from tobacco and mono-culture and developing small processing industries on his Mount Vernon lands. Through these steps he managed to pay off his debts. In his lands Washington developed a system of land management and crop rotation in all antedating what best organic agriculture has to propose today. He followed up this economic testament by freeing his slaves, showing that the solution to the problem of slavery needed to follow the shift to a new economy. Sadly, his example was not followed. Washington's legacy in the political realm lay in holding the balance between those who

like Jefferson (at least initially) wanted the American Revolution to emulate its French counterpart and those who like Hamilton were beholden to English imperialism through the agencies of central banking and economic monopolies (Virginia Company, Newfoundland Company, etc.). Holding a delicate balance between the two he charted a course between pure unrestricted democracy of the French style (with its consequent excesses) and the oligarchic tendencies of Britain, exerted through unrestricted financial avenues.

Washington's greatest contribution lay in his exemplary restraint in the use of power, first of all in the conduct of the revolutionary war, where he never overstepped his bounds in relation to Congress, and refrained from using his charisma, which could have undoubtedly given him what he wanted. He decided thus to fight a war that would itself serve as education for other relationships of power than the ones known in the Old World. When absolute power was within his reach he refused the crown offered to him by Colonel Lewis Nicola in the name of the army in 1782. Finally, he exerted the same restraint in the use of executive power and relinquished willingly a third term of the presidency that was his for the taking, thus modeling a future for America that had never been tried elsewhere.

On September 18, 1793 the United States Capitol was inaugurated by Washington dressed in Masonic ritual vestments, covering the cornerstone with the symbols of corn, oil and wine. His commitments to the early ideals of Masonry sheds light on a further aspect of Washington's views, his little understood effort as president to repudiate party politics. It was not an unrealistic utopian dream but a generous spiritual ideal, no doubt ahead of its time. Popular imagination seized this dimension of Washington's stature by equating him to the then popular figure of Saint Tammany, whom the Lenni Lenape considered a "First One," an initiate and spiritual leader.